

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOMBAY 00536 070330Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-07 SSO-00 INRE-00 OES-06 /039 W
-----070334Z 051347 /73/11

O 041106Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7125
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 0536

STADIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - (TEXT PARA 1)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH IN
SUBJ: TARAPUR

REF: A) BOMBAY 408; B) STATE 40548

1. CHAIRMAN SETHNA TELPHONED ME TODAY (MARCH 4) TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE CONTINUING DELAY IN FURNISHING THE CONSTRUCTION TIME-FRAME AND COST ESTIMATES FOR CREATING ADDITIONAL WASTE STORAGE FACILITIES WHICH HE HAD PROMISED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS (REFTEL A). HE SAID THE PREPARATION OF THIS DATA IS NEARING COMPLETION AND WOULD QUITE CERTAINLY REACH ME AT THE VERY BEGINNING NEXT WEEK.

2. CHAIRMAN SETHNA EXPLAINED THAT THIS LATEST DELAY HAS ARISEN BECAUSE HE HAD TO SPEND THREE DAYS IN NEW DELHI EARLY THIS WEEK TO COMPLETE BUSINESS THAT NORMALLY WOULD HAVE TAKEN ONLY A SINGLE DAY. HE SAID THAT FRENETIC CABINET ACTIVITY ON MATTERS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE ELECTION HAS MADE IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ANYTHING DONE ON LONGER-RANGE PROBLEMS EVEN THOUGH SOME DECISIONS ON HIS PROGRAMS ARE URGENT. AS AN EXAMPLE HE SAID THAT THE CABINET MEETING HE ATTENDED THIS WEEK WAS DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO IMMEDIATE, ELECTION-RELATED PROBLEMS AND HE HAD A HARD TIME IN
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GETTING THE MINISTERS TO FOCUS AT ALL ON HIS CONCERNS. ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED ON MARCH 20.

3. SETHNA SAID THAT THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAS A REPORT FROM THEIR WASHINGTON EMBASSY CONVEYING DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY NYE'S INVITATION (REFTEL B). SETHNA SAID THE GOI INTENDS TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE DEPARTMENT'S INITIATIVE, BUT

NOTHING SUBSTANTIVE CAN BE DONE BEFORE THE ELECTION. SETHNA SAYS THAT ANY INDIAN DELEGATION VISITING WASHINGTON IN RESPONSE TO DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY NYE'S OVERTURE WILL HAVE TO HAVE A CABINET MANDATE OR ITS EQUIVALENT. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY NYE WAS HOPING FOR PRIVATE AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS, RATHER THAN NEGOTIATIONS BASED ON FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS. SETHNA SAID THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS PREFERENCE BUT THAT GIVEN THE WAY THAT THE INVITATION WAS RECEIVED IN INDIA, HE REALLY HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THE GOI'S REACTION WHICH HAD BEEN PRETTY MUCH DECIDED BY THE TIME HE WAS ABLE TO TAKE THE MATTER UP IN NEW DELHI.

4. IN CLOSING, SETHNA AGAIN URGED ME TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH HIM INFORMALLY DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AS HE STILL HOPES TO AVOID ANY PREMATURE HARDENING OF POSITION AND CLAIMS HE REMAINS WILLING TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO PROMOTE A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ACCOMMODATION, ALTHOUGH HE WARNED THAT THE DELHI POSITION ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION IS VERY "TOUGH" INDEED.
COURTNEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS, NUCLEAR FUELS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BOMBAY00536
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770075-0265
Format: TEL
From: BOMBAY
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770394/aaaadeug.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 47f037be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 77 BOMBAY 408, 77 STATE 40548
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3212287
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TARAPUR
TAGS: TECH, IN
To: STATE NEW DELHI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/47f037be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009